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AUTHOR McCune, Allen
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ABSTRACT

The Halstead/Bentley Public School District in south-central Kansas has a long, successful history of administering a comprehensive evaluation program of achievement, scholastic aptitude, and interest tests and inventories in grades K-12. The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is an important part of the evaluation program, and each year approximately 65% of the junior class voluntarily take part in the testing and pay their own registration fees. The major purpose of the evaluation program is to help parents, faculty, staff, and students to understand each student's abilities. This understanding forms the basis of educational and career planning for each student. The PSAT/NMSQT is not used primarily as a scholarship test, but as a tool for education and career guidance. This report describes the district's procedures for administering the PSAT/NMSQT from preparation to follow-up. Data tables show post high school plans of seniors and scholarship awards from 1967 to 1985. (JHZ)

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MAY 1986
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Dr. Allen McCune, Counselo
Halstead Public Schools
Halstead, Kansas 67056
(316) 835-2682
30 February 1986

SMALL, RURAL SCHOOLS CAN EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THE PSAT/NMSQT

The Halstead/Bentley Public School Distrcit comprises 130 square miles in South-central Kansas and enrolls approximately 700 students in grades K - 12. Since 1967 the Distrcit has produced four National Merit Finalists, 12 Semi-finanlists and seven Commended Scholars. The District has a long, successful history of administering a comprehensive evaluation program of achievement, scholastic aptitude, and interest tests and inventories in grades K - 12. The PSAT/NMSQT is an important, integral part of this comprehensive plan and each year about 65% of the Junior Class voluntarily take part in the testing and pay their own registration fees.

The major purpose of the District's Comprehensive Evaluation Program is a positive effort to help parents, faculty, staff and students understand each student's abilities more completely. This self-understanding then becomes the foundation of educational and career planning for each student. The major purpose of including the PSAT/NMSQT in the comprehensive evaluation is because of the test's value as an educational/career guidance tool. It is not used primarily as a Scholarship Test. Any scholarships which accrue to a student and the accompanying recongition for the school are good, but strictly secondary benefits.

The procedures used by the district to maximize the positive effects of the PSAT/NMSQT include:

Prior to the opening of school during the educational in-service program, a report is presented onthe results of past PSAT/NMSQT and how these results can be utilized by individual students and faculty members. The faculty and staff are encouraged to directly promote the registration for the test among the Junior Class.

In late August, prior to the beginning of the academic year, the Preliminary Announcement Booklet is mailed to ALL parents who have students in the Junior Class along with a cover letter highlighting advantages of taking the PSAT/NMSQT and detailed procedures for enrollment.

Two weeks prior to the test all Juniors in the top half of the class, academically, and who have not signed up for the test, are contacted and encouraged to register.

One week prior to the test a meeting is held with all those who are registered to review test-taking procedures, reasons for taking the test and to answer individual questions. No member of the class is ever discouraged from taking the test and the emphasis again is on the educational/career guidance value of the information to be derived from the results of the test. Cramming, high-pressure study or review procedures or crash memory techniques are discouraged. Emphasis is on positive self- image and encouragement to "do your best."

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The test is administered on the National Date during the week and the timing is such that students begin their school day in a regular manner abd they have their "break" following the test with their friends. This helps reduce stress for the students.

When the test scores are returned copies are made and mailed to parents of the Juniors along with an individualized cover letter highlighting appropriate individual guidance comments and an invitation to come in to discuss the results further. An individual conference is held with each student to imterpret the results and to use the results to enhance self-understanding and as a basis for educational/career planning and decision-making. Students and parents are strongly encouraged to review all questions and answers on the test.

Test results are posted to the student's permanent guidance record for future reference and are referred to frequently as a guidance resource. Scores are NEVER used to section a student into or out of any program, but they are useful guidelines and often do result in student/parent decisions regarding class selection and career planning.

Individual and group test scores as well as past data and information are shared with the faculty along with any individual student and/or curricular implications which might be indicated.

Follow-up studies indicate that students do not "fear" the test and parents and students view the PSAT/NMSQT as a good, scientifically based guidance resource. Many students take the test who do not plan to attend a traditional four-year collge or university program, but these students, too receive immeasurable guidance help in their educationa career guidance decisions.

Halstead High School
520 WEST SIXTH
HALSTEAD, KANSAS 67056
316/835-2682

December 14, 1985

Parents of Juniors who took the National Merit Scholarship Test:

Attached is a copy of your student's scores on the National Merit Scholarship Test taken last October.

I have invited each student in to personally discuss their scores. The highest score possible is 99%. The lowest of course is 0 and an average score is 42%.

This is a very difficult test and it does prepare students for the SAT and ACT tests. I will be sending a letter to you in March, 1986, encouraging you to register your student for the ACT test this year.

I have also enclosed a booklet explaining the National Merit Test (PSAT) and a test booklet. There is also a card showing your student's answers to the questions. I want to urge you to have your student go back over the test and see why the answer is right or wrong. THIS IS AN EXCELLENT LEARNING TOOL FOR FUTURE TESTS!!

We find that most students improve their test scores when they take the SAT or the ACT. This is because they have developed more self-confidence and they have learned how to "pace themselves" and follow directions exactly.

Taking these tests is a major step toward getting financial assistance to attend college, junior college, vocational school or some specialized school.

If a student did not do well on this test, it is important that they make an effort to improve their knowledge in the areas. This can be done by: study at home, additional study here at school or by taking additional courses at Halstead High School.

I would be glad to discuss individual planning for improvement of test scores with you or answer questions which you might have about testing or career planning at any time.

Sincerely,

Allen D. McCune

Dr. Allen D. McCune
Counseling

ADMc/kln
ENC: Student test scores
Informational Booklet
Copy of the Test

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HALSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL - SENIOR CLASS SUMMARY

Year	Total Seniors	Drop Outs	Non-Grad.	Trans-ferred	Total Grad.	Graduates entering Post-High School Programs All Programs No.	%	4 year No.	%	two-year No.	%	Vo-Tech No.	%	Working No.	%	Students Completing Programs		Total Speci Ed. No
1966-67	43	1	3	0	39	31	80	21	54							12	60	
1967-68	45	1	5	0	39	32	82	23	59							14	64	
1968-69	44	1	1	0	42	35	83	21	50							10	76	
1969-70	71	2	0	1	68	46	68	33	48							19	72	
1970-71	50	0	0	1	49	31	63	26	53							14	71	
1971-72	66	1	0	1	64	38	61	20	44							14	70	
1972-73	65	2	1	0	62	39	63	32	52									
1973-74	51	1	1	0	49	28	57	24	49									
1974-75	66	0	0	0	66	40	61	23	38	15	25	3	5	20	31			
1975-76	53	2	0	0	51	42	67	25	41	14	23	3	5	19	31			
1976-77	53	2	0	0	51	32	62	15	29	14	30	3	3	19	38			
1977-78	62	1	0	1	60	37	61	30	58	5	10	-	-	17	33		67	
1978-79	66	4	0	2	60	37	69	19	35	7	14	11	20	17	31		60	
1979-80	45	0	1	1	43	33	76	20	34	9	16	4	7	25	43		64	
1980-81	42	2	0	0	40	29	73	17	43	8	20	4	10	11	28			
1981-82	41	1	0	0	40	25	62	6	16	9	24	10	25	13	35			18
1982-83	65	1	0	0	64	50	76	26	40	13	20	11	17	15	24			18
1983-84	45	1	1	1	42	28	70	15	35	6	16	7	19	13	30			
1984-85	53	3	1	1	48	38	74	22	44	9	17	7	13	13	26			

Dr. McCune/Counsel

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Halstead High School

Dr. Allen McCune
May, 1985

A STUDY OF THE

RETENTION RATE OF HALSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN THEIR POST-HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

YEAR	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	Averages 4yr 5yr 6yr
CLASS SIZE	51	41	65	42	57	54	49	49	
Number of Students planning post-high school programs	38(74%)	28(63%)	50(77%)	25(62%)	28(71%)	38(67%)	30(56%)	34(69%)	69% 69% 69%
Number who did not begin their programs	2	2	7	0	0	3	3	3	3 3 3
Number beginning their programs	36(94%)	26(92%)	43(86%)	25(62%)	28(71%)	35(61%)	27(50%)	31(63%)	84% 81% 78%
Number graduating	0	1	15	6	24	26	13	16	
Number still in their programs	34	25	20	12	4	2	1	0	
TOTAL - RETENTION RATE	34(94%)	26(96%)	35(90%)	18(72%)	28(71%)	28(80%)	14(45%)	16(51%)	88% 85% 85%
Number who have "up-graded" their programs	0	1	3	9	4	5	7	6	
Number who have completed their original programs and enrolled in higher programs	0	0	3	3	5	7	6	7	
Number married	1(2%)	1(3%)	8(12%)	15(35%)	12(21%)	16(29%)	28(57%)	24(48%)	
Children	0	0	2	7	9	9	18	15	

The retention rate of 83% for 4 years; 69% for 5 years and 64% over a 6 year span is high and indicates that graduates of Halstead High School do make sound decisions regarding their post-high school plans.

The retention rate includes changes in majors and schools in the same general types of programs. All types of post-high school programs are included: military, junior college, vocational schools, proprietary schools as well as colleges and universities.

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FINANCIAL AWARDS FOR HALSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
1968 - 1985

Graduating Class	Number of Students Receiving Awards	Total Awards	Renewals During* the year	
1968	13	$ 7,340.00		
1969	10	7,985.00		
1970	13	7,400.00		
1971	16	8,750.00		
1972	17	12,290.00		
1973	20	19,965.00		
1974	15	10,435.00		
1975	28	29,522.00		
1976	20	19,320.00	$ 11,500.00	(first year
1977	14	19,960.00	12,350.00	for records)
1978	21	30,700.00	16,700.00	
1979	24	38,100.00	17,210.00	
1980	25	32,825.00	19,750.00	
1981	15	10,840.00	13,750.00	
1982	18	14,700.00	17,680.00	
1983	18	14,600.00	15.600.00	
1984	15	18,600.00	12,450.00	
1985**	20	25,200.00	16,200.00	GRAND TOTAL
Totals	304	$336,500.00	$142,050.00	$478,550.00

* Renewals are difficult to document
** Totals at this time 5/29/1985